

**THE WORKS OF  
SHAKESPEARE:  
THE TRAGEDY  
OF CORIOLANUS**

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The works of Shakespeare: The tragedy of Coriolanus by R. H. Case & W. J. Craig

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**R. H. CASE & W. J. CRAIG**

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THE ARDEN SHAKESPEARE  
GENERAL EDITOR: W. J. CRAIG  
1899-1906: R. H. CASE, 1909

THE TRAGEDY  
OF  
CORIOLANUS



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THE TRAGEDY OF  
CORIOLANUS

EDITED BY  
W. J. CRAIG AND R. H. CASE



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## PREFACE

I REGRET that the completion of this edition of *Coriolanus*, which came into my hands in 1909, has been perforce so long deferred, and that before Mr. Craig's death deprived the Arden Shakespeare of his devotion and scholarship, he had not brought his work on the play to a stage at which I might have confined myself to little more than seeing it through the press. Unfortunately I have been obliged by the rough state in which it was left, to add, subtract, and alter on a large scale.

Mr. Craig had typed all headings of passages which he thought of annotating, leaving many blank, roughly explaining others, and illustrating these from his unrivalled stores with a generosity much beyond the scale of the edition. He would later have supplied omissions, cancelled superfluities, rewritten or replaced explanations, and selected and corrected examples; and all this I have done freely, sometimes also substituting examples where verification was both necessary and impossible. As he had, for the most part, reserved difficulties requiring thought, I am almost wholly responsible for the reasoned notes.

Mr. Craig had roughly fixed his text and prepared the *Life of Coriolanus* from North's *Plutarch* for the press; but for his Introduction he had only made jottings, and I have been obliged to write what follows quite independently.

This edition keeps as close to the folio text as the plan of the series admits, generally retaining obsolete forms of words and obsolete grammatical forms. The old stage directions, if sufficient, and if clearly expressed, though less gracefully than by modern editors, are also reproduced. Debts to old and

modern editors are of course many, and have been recorded in the notes, in which are also specified constant obligations to the new *Oxford English Dictionary*. I have, however, ventured to dispute the application of two or three of its citations, e.g. in notes on IV. v. 230 and v. i. 16. *The Cambridge Shakespeare* has been used for variant readings subsequent to the first folio (F.).

New matter, or supposed new interpretation, in the notes, includes a suggested explanation of the crux in I. ix. 46: "Let him be made an overture for the wars!"

References to other plays of Shakespeare apply to the Globe edition, and those to Gifford's *Jonson*, ed. Cunningham, to the edition in three volumes.

R. H. CASE

## INTRODUCTION

AMONG the twenty plays which are first found in the folio of 1623, *Coriolanus* is one of sixteen for which licence to publish was obtained by Master Blounte and Izaak Jaggard on November 8th of that year, as "Master William Shakspeers *Comedyes, Histories, and Tragedyes* soe manie of the said Copies as are not formerly entred to other men." In the list of sixteen plays that follows, *Coriolanus* heads the section of tragedies, as it also does in the "Catalogue" of contents in the folio itself. But in the folio text it is preceded by *Troilus and Cressida*, which, though omitted in the catalogue, seems to have been meant to come fourth in the section, and was afterwards put first, in the course of printing.

Similarities of source, language, and metre, have suggested a date of composition for *Coriolanus* following closely on that of *Antony and Cleopatra*. Both plays exemplify the close-packed elliptical style of Shakespeare's late work, and also its metrical characteristics; of which those that can be numbered for comparison, and can be shown to have been used increasingly by Shakespeare, especially the overflow, the speech-ending within the line, the aggregate of light and weak endings, would bring the plays immediately together in the order assumed. The most favoured date is therefore the latter part of 1608, or early in 1609, because *Antony and Cleopatra* is usually assigned to 1608; but as, in the edition of that play in this series, reasons were given for considering 1607, or even 1606, as possible dates for its production, and for excluding 1608, the year 1607 becomes a possibility for *Coriolanus* as well as 1608 or later, in proportion as these reasons are valid. They are based upon the re-fashioning by Daniel of his *Cleopatra*, in 1607 (or between 1605 and 1607), in more dramatic form, and with new detail, suggesting *Antony and Cleopatra* as the model which converted him from dull recitation to representation.

External evidence of a reliable kind for the date of *Coriolanus* is not forthcoming, except that, as Malone was the first to perceive, the language of Menenius in relating the fable of